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INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7583
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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 7502
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 3556
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 2036
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3026
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 004204

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SUPREME COURT FREES POLITICAL DETAINEES, OPENS
ROADS

REF: ISLAMABAD 4167

Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (U) On September 27, Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry ordered the release of political party activists arrested over the September 22-23 weekend and the lifting of roadblocks throughout and surrounding the capital.

[1](#)2. (U) At least 100 opposition political party leaders and activists, including PML-Nawaz in-country leader Javed Hashmi, had been detained. According to the GOP, their arrest was necessary "for the maintenance of public order." (Note: Embassy and the EU, separately, issued September 24 statements protesting the detention of opposition party members. End note.)

[1](#)3. (U) Although some opposition had planned protests at the Supreme Court (hearing closing remarks in the Musharraf case) and the Election Commission (receiving presidential nomination papers), they were only able to muster about 50 MMA members at any point during this past two-week period. The GOP made it difficult to demonstrate by establishing road blocks September 27 and security checks around government buildings, stopping all traffic from entering the capital.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The Supreme Court's action is another sign of the judiciary's growing confidence in defending civil society. Ahead of what is expected to be a pro-Musharraf verdict, the Court was also burnishing its credentials with lawyers and opposition figures. End comment.

PATTERSON